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# Capitol Punishment . . .

By Art Buchwald

## *No Speculating Please*

THE METHOD used by President Johnson in announcing Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach's appointment as Under Secretary of State has Washington very worried.

Buchwald

You may recall the President did not make the announcement until a reporter asked the question at a press conference.

The fear here is that if the President decides to break the news of all his appointments in this manner, and no one asks him the right question at a press conference, many important vacancies in the Government may never be filled.

This was compounded by the President's statement that the more the press speculated about a certain individual for a job, the less likelihood that person would have of getting the appointment.

If this is the case, perhaps we may never have an Attorney General again.

Suppose the President is meeting with advisers to discuss Mr. Katzenbach's replacement in the Justice Department.

"Mr. President, I don't like to push you, but it's been a year now and you still haven't announced who the Attorney General is going to be."

"It's not my fault. If the newspapers would stop speculating I could decide on somebody. But every time I think I've got someone they haven't heard of, the name pops up in a column, and then I've got to eliminate him. I thought I had them when I decided to appoint Sandy Koufax to the job, but somehow Sports Illustrated got wind of it."

"WE HADN'T thought anyone would be on to Koufax," one of the advisers admitted. "What happened to Dr. Spock?"

"Drew Pearson had it in one of his predictions and I was darned if I was going to give him the satisfaction of being right," the President replied.

Another aide said "I see where Evans and Novak said you would appoint George Hamilton."

"I was sorry about that. George might have made a good Attorney General."

"Mr. President, don't you think we ought to appoint someone as Attorney General with legal experience?"

"I'd like to, but you know as well as I do that every lawyer we could possibly think of has already been suggested for the job by either a column or a newspaper. The more they speculate, the harder it gets for me."

"Why couldn't we forget about the press and just appoint somebody to the job?"

"Not as long as I'm President. I'm not going to have anyone tell me who to appoint and who not to appoint. Besides, you lose the element of surprise."

"The President's right," an aide said. "We should be able to think of somebody that the press hasn't thought of."

"It's easier said than done," another aide said. "Remember when we were going to appoint Ed Sullivan, and Variety heard about it?"

"There must be someone that no one has thought of."

Just then the phone rings. An aide picks it up and listens. Then he says to the President "it's Hubert Humphrey. He wants to know if you still think highly of him."

The President snaps his fingers. "Why didn't we think of it before?"

The aide says, "It was right under our very noses."

The President picks up the phone. "Hubert, I've got a job for you. No, I can't tell you what it is, but tune in on my press conference this afternoon. I think you'll be in for a real surprise."

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